

'Extreme' genealogy dazzles

*Provo's ancestry.com,
DNA tests aid searches*

By Matt Crenson

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Associated Press

NEW YORK — Lee Drew had a chat with some cousins the other day.

SLAVERY SAGA

*Ancestry.com and
Sharpton shocker*

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He was sitting in his home office in Orem, Utah. Four of the cousins were in England.

One was in

Australia, another in South Africa. A few more joined in from other parts of North America.

Drew is one of a new breed of genealogists who are doing things that would have been impossible in the not-so-distant era of dusty archives and whirring microfilm readers. He has found so many of his relatives that he needs a computer database to keep track of them all — all 1.7 million of them.

Just as modern equipment has made it possible for any reasonably motivated person to climb Mount Everest or dive to the Andrea Doria, new technologies have made it possible to achieve incredible genealogical feats with relatively modest effort.

Now, it takes nothing more than casual curiosity and a few hours of research to discover that civil

appearance in Tokyo to accept MTV Japan award last year.

Jackson, in trademark sunglasses and black leather jacket, was ushered by guards past hundreds of screaming Japanese fans at Narita Airport on Sunday afternoon, some carrying signs that read "We love Michael" and "Welcome to Japan."

At the VIP party, guests paying \$3,500 will get to mingle with Jackson and spend 30 seconds to one minute each of exclusive face time with the Gloved One, according to organizers. It was unclear whether the star will perform any songs.

While in Tokyo, the star will also host a fan art contest for Japanese who cannot afford VIP tickets, organizers Davis, Bain and Associates said in an e-mail.

Wales restaurant to deliver West's dinner — to N.Y.

If Kanye West were to walk into the British Raj's dining room and order dinner, it would cost the rapper about \$17.50. But since the restaurant is delivering — from Wales to New York — it's going to cost a bit more.

For a feast of onion bhajees, chapati breads, biryanis, pappadums, a specially prepared fish dish and vegetables on the side, the bill will top \$3,900, plus travel and accommodation for the restaurant's head chef.

The meal was requested for West and seven guests by a music promotion company, the restaurant said Sunday. The company had previously ordered food from the restaurant near Cardiff, Wales, for an after-show party for a Snoop Dogg concert in London.

Normally, the restaurant doesn't deliver outside a 3-mile radius of its location, which is about 150 miles west of London.

'Entourage' actor Grenier says role is all about fun

Adrian Grenier says he isn't having to work hard playing Vince Chase on the HBO hit series "Entourage."

"This show is about friendship and having the time of your lives,"

GENEALOGY

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rights activist Al Sharpton is descended from slaves who were owned by ancestors of the late South Carolina Sen. Strom Thurmond, a staunch opponent of desegregation. That feat was accomplished by the commercial genealogy Web site ancestry.com, which boasts of having the largest online family history database in the world, with more than 4 billion records. Among the company's 725,000 subscribers there are people who have discovered they descend from royalty, or Mayflower passengers, or that Butch Cassidy is their seventh cousin. "It's a great time to be alive," Drew said. It isn't just the databases. Drew also uses the Internet to communicate with relatives around the globe, sharing information and research tips. And services like Google Books give him free access to formidable university library collections. At 57 he remembers the old days, when doing genealogy meant driving up to the LDS Church's Family History Library in Salt Lake City or spending his vacations strolling through English churchyards looking at headstones. Now it can mean nothing more than strolling

into his home office and booting up his computer. Internet genealogy can be extremely productive, agreed Dick Eastman, who writes an online genealogy newsletter. But it depends greatly on where your ancestors came from. The Internet is great for the United States, especially New England. And it's pretty good for Britain and Ireland. But if your ancestors came from Southern Europe, Africa, Asia or even Canada in some cases, the Internet can be pretty useless. "If I want to go look up my French-Canadian ancestors there's almost nothing to help me more than two or three generations back," Eastman said. "It's not going to be as rosy an experience as some of the online services would like you to think." Herbert Huebscher, a retired electrical engineer from Franklin Square, N.Y., found himself in that kind of situation when he went looking for his ancestors. The most distant ones he could identify were Ukrainian Jews who were living in a small village near the Romanian border around 1830. "In general, Jewish paper trail genealogy tends to hit a brick wall around 1800, give or take 50 years," Huebscher

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Peggy Hayes
Relative Genetics

said. To push farther into the past, he turned to DNA. DNA testing has made it possible for people to make connections when the paper trail fades into tatters. The technology was used several years ago to show that Thomas Jefferson — or one of his male relatives — fathered a child by his slave Sally Hemings. It has also shown that a significant proportion of men in modern Ireland can trace a direct male descent from Niall of the Nine Hostages, a legendary 5th-century king. Customers of Relative

Genetics, a company based in Salt Lake City, have traced their roots to Scotland, Africa and other distant countries with DNA testing. Huebscher had his own genetic profile tested by a Houston-based company called Family Tree DNA. He found that he matched one other individual in the company's database, a South African-born Londoner named Saul Isseroff. It turned out the two had some very distinctive anomalies in their DNA profiles, which allowed them to identify other matches as new Family Tree DNA customers joined the company's database. They have now found more than 40 closely matched families. Nearly all of the families were Jewish, and nearly all of them trace their heritage back to Eastern Europe — though oddly enough, one family traces its roots to Puerto Rico. A statistical analysis of the genetic data showed that whether they were named Huebscher or Isseroff, Wolinsky or Rosa, all of the families must have shared a

single common ancestor who probably lived four or five centuries ago, long before most Jews even had surnames, much less written vital records. Though his research is not yet conclusive, Huebscher believes the common genetic ancestor may have been descended from Sephardic Jews who lived in Spain before the Inquisition. Just a little patience may be enough to solve the mystery, said Peggy Hayes of Relative Genetics. "The databases are growing very rapidly," she said. "As the genetic genealogy databases grow, the success rate is going to grow as well." For some lucky people, the techniques of extreme genealogy make it possible to trace their origins back not just centuries, but a millennium or more. All they have to do is link themselves to a royal line, Drew explained, and ride it back as far as it goes. "We're all related to royalty," Drew said. The trick is to prove it. But thanks to the power of

extreme genealogy, it can be a lot easier than you might think. Every French monarch since the 10th century was a descendant of Charlemagne. So was William the Conqueror, which means every British monarch since 1066 also descends from the King of the Franks. And that means at least 18 U.S. presidents, 14 first ladies, Walt Disney, Colin Powell, Brooke Shields — a good number of the people whose family history has ever been seriously researched by genealogists — can trace their ancestry to Charlemagne.

AFGHAN

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car near their convoy "as part of a complex ambush involving enemy small-arms fire from several directions."

The U.S. troops, who were patrolling near Jalalabad airfield, returned fire, and the civilians were killed and wounded in the cross-fire during the battle, according to a statement from the military press office at Bagram air base, near Kabul.

"We regret the death of innocent Afghan citizens as a result of the Taliban extremists' cowardly act," Lt. Col. David Aspinall, a mili-



RAHMAT GUL, ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Afghan shouts anti-American slogans after U.S. troops opened fire following a suicide bombing.

working to contain the continuing insurgent attacks, in particular roadside bombs and suicide attacks, and win the support of the people with reconstruction and development projects. Deadly riots shook Kabul last May after U.S. troops

the U.S. soldiers treated every car and person along the highway as a potential attacker, though none of the people showed hostile intent, Muhammad Khan

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Katawazi, the district chief of Shinwar, told The AP.

"They were firing everywhere, and they even opened fire on 14 to 15 vehicles passing on the highway," said Tur Gul, 38, who was standing on the roadside by a gas station and was shot twice in the right hand. "They opened fire on everybody, the ones inside the vehicles and the ones on foot."

Some of the wounded interviewed by the AP said the soldiers opened fire indiscriminately on passing cars and pedestrians on the busy main road.

"When we parked our vehicle, when they passed us, they opened fire on our vehicle," said 15-year-old

Mohammad Ishaq, who was hit by two bullets, in the left arm and right ear. "It was a convoy of three American Humvees. All three Humvees were firing around."

In other fighting, two British soldiers were killed Saturday in southern Afghanistan, the British Defense Ministry said Sunday. The men were involved in heavy fighting that has raged for three days in the town of Sangin, said Col. Tom Collins, a NATO spokesman in Kabul. Townspeople have fled the town and abandoned their shops as Taliban insurgents and British troops stationed there have been trading artillery and rocket fire, according to a resident of the area.

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Back Pain?

Salt Lake City Area/Davis Co. — According to a recently released back pain relief report, most

no idea how to
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